

***Foundations of Covenant Theology: A Biblical-Theological Study of Genesis 1–3*, by Lane G. Tipton**  
**Westminster Book of the Month**  
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*“The triune God sets on display his unchanging glory in the invisible heaven-temple to receive worship from elect angels and his covenant people.” – Lane Tipton*

**I. Ch. 1 – Introduction**

- A. *“The aim is to present from Genesis 1–3 a comprehensive but digestible overview of the teaching of Scripture on the foundations of covenant theology, which is the context that informs God’s relationship to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden” (p. 9)*

GENESIS 1

- ◆ The glory of the triune God
- ◆ The image of God and covenant.
- ◆ The mountain of God
- ◆ The two trees

GENESIS 2–3 (and beyond)

- ◆ The fall
- ◆ The promise of redemption in a second and last Adam
- ◆ The garments of animal skins
- ◆ The flaming sword
- ◆ Jesus Christ and the Spirit

**II. Ch. 2 – The Glory of the Triune God** – The eternal triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)—who is eternal, unchanging, true, and self-sufficient, and full of glory—is the central concern of the Bible and the sole object of true worship.

- A. **Gen 1:1** – *“In the beginning, God created ...”*  
 B. **Mal 3:6** – *“For I the Lord do not change ...”*  
 C. **James 1:17** – *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”*

*“How can God engage in living activity while remaining absolutely immutable? This is where the church must bow before the self-contained and living triune God with wonder and awe. One of the countless reasons to give praise to God is that all of his promises find their Yes in Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (2 Cor 1:20; Heb 13:8).” (pp. 28–29)*

**III. Ch. 3 – The Absolute Beginning** – Gen 1:1 describes the first creation event (“the absolute beginning”) in which God created a “distinct, created, but presently veiled domain or realm” (p. 33), called “the heavens,” perpetually filled with a revelation of God’s glory and that God replicated in his creation of the visible world.

- A. **Gen 1:1** – *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*  
 B. **Neh 9:6** – *“You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it ...”*  
 C. **Col 1:16** – *“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible ...”*

*“The hearts and minds of the people of God are opened to a realm that vastly supersedes everything in the visible heavens and earth—a realm where thieves cannot break in, where moths and rust cannot corrupt, and where the glory of God always shines to evoke the praise and wonder of his people.” (p. 40)*

**IV. Ch. 4 – The Holy Spirit Fills the Heaven-Temple** – The Bible describes the revelation of God’s glory in the created-but-hidden realm of heaven as a tent filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

- A. **Is 40:22** – *“It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, ... who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in.”*
- B. **Gen 1:2** – *“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”*
- C. **Ex 40:34** – *“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”*

*“No sooner is the heavenly tent pitched than the Holy Spirit instantaneously envelops the whole place, filling it with the glory of God ... It is now apparent that a God-centered concern is a Spirit and heaven-centered concern. To be concerned about the glory of the triune God is to be concerned about the realm where his glory radiates.” (pp. 45–46)*

**V. Ch. 5 – The Creation of the Visible Heavens and Earth** – God replicated the presently hidden realm of heaven when he made the world that we presently see and in which we presently live.

- A. **Gen 1:2** – *“And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”*
- B. **Gen 1:6–8** – *“And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ ... And it was so. <sup>8</sup> And God called the expanse Heaven.”*
- C. **Gen 1:24** – *“And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.”*

*“[T]he hovering of the Spirit over the formless void [in Gen 1:2] is meant to bring into view the creation of the visible heavens and earth as a replica of the glory of God in the invisible heavens. The six days of creation should not simply be thought of as creation in general, but as a replication of what God created in the absolute beginning.” (p. 54)*

**VI. Ch. 6 – Eden as the Place of Worshipful Ascent to God** – The Garden of Eden, with its mountain, beautiful gemstones, and flowing rivers, intensively replicated the beauty and glory of heaven.

- A. **Gen 2:9–10** – *“And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.”*
- B. **Rev 22:4** – *“Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life ...”*
- C. **Ezek 28:13** – *“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering ... I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked.”*

*“Everything in Eden is calculated to be an earthly replica of the glory of God in the highest heavens. It is designed to orient man’s mind beyond itself to the glory of God in his permanent abode in the heavenly temple. Image bearers are placed in Eden by God to worship him even as the angels worship him in the original heavenly temple ... The mountain in Eden oriented Adam geographically toward heaven” (pp. 61, 65)*

**VII. Ch. 7 – Created in Religious Fellowship With God** – God created Adam and Eve in sinless religious fellowship with Himself as a replica of the Trinity’s own living fellowship of persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

- A. **Gen 1:26–27** – “*Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion ...’*<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”
- B. **John 1:1** – “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God ...*”
- C. **Eph 4:24** – “*... created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*”

*“Adam was made to be an ethical free agent in fellowship with God for the purpose of worship ... He was created in such a way that the very breath he possessed existed so that he might confess the glory of the triune God.” (p. 71)*

**VIII. Ch. 8 – The Covenant of Works** – After creating Adam and Eve in fellowship with Himself, God enveloped that relationship into an original covenant of works, in which he promised life in the heavenly temple for obedience, and death apart from God for disobedience, with a probationary tree to decide the outcome.

- A. **Gen 2:15–16** – “*The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*<sup>16</sup> *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,*<sup>17</sup> *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’*”
- B. **Hosea 6:7** – “*But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt faithlessly with me.”*

*“God takes an ordinary tree and assigns to it a special probationary significance to teach Adam about life in covenant. This is a life of whole-souled worship of God for the sake of God alone ... Will he love God for God’s sake alone? ... Will he worship the Creator? Or will he instead worship and serve the creature? The two paths set before Adam are really two entirely different and antithetical religions.” (p. 82)*

**IX. Ch. 9 – The Tree of Life and Sabbath Rest** – God tasked Adam in covenant to guard the holy replica of Eden from unlawful intruders and, in the tree of life, set before Adam a symbol of the heavenly life and eternal Sabbath rest with God, to be earned by covenant obedience.

1. **Gen 2:9** – “*The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*
2. **Gen 3:22–23** – “*‘Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—’*<sup>23</sup> *therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.”*
3. **Rev 2:7** – “*To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”*

*“If Adam had successfully carried out his mandate in full obedience to God by not eating of the probation tree, he would have dealt a deathblow to the devil and then stretched out his hand to eat of the tree of life. This tree represented the promise of advancement beyond earthly probation in conflict with the serpent to the highest heavens where God is enthroned in Sabbath rest.” (pp. 91–92)*

X. **Ch. 10 – The Fall into Sin and the Promise of Redemption** – Adam’s rebellion against God in the covenant of works introduced disaster, while God in his grace further introduced the first promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- A. **Gen 3:4–5** – *“But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”*
- B. **Rom 5:12** – *“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned ...”*
- C. **Gen 3:14–15** – *“The Lord God said to the serpent ... I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*
- D. **Gen 3:21** – *“And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.”*

*“But where judgment is expected, we instead see the dawning of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace ... From Gen. 3:15 onward, you have a Christ-centered Scripture.” (pp. 103–4)*

XI. **Ch. 11 – The Promised Seed** – Jesus Christ is the promised Champion Seed of Eve, who passes under the flaming sword of God’s wrath on our behalf, opening the way to the tree of life in God’s heavenly paradise for every believer.

- A. **Gen 3:24** – *“He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”*
- B. **Luke 3:23, 38** – *“Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph ... the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”*
- C. **Luke 4:12–13** – *“And Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’<sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.”*

*“Jesus’ quotation in response to Satan reveals that he is recapitulating the temptation of Israel in the wilderness just as he is recapitulating the primal temptation of Adam in the garden. He thus appears not only as the second and last Adam, but also as the new and true Israel.” (p. 117)*

XII. **Ch. 12 – The Second and Last Adam** – Jesus Christ’s perfect obedience unto death and into resurrection life earns the original covenant blessing of heavenly life (offered to Adam but forfeited by him), which he gives to all who are united to Christ by faith.

- A. **Luke 23:35–38** – *“And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, ‘He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!’<sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine<sup>37</sup> and saying, ‘If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!’<sup>38</sup> There was also an inscription over him, ‘This is the King of the Jews.’<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’”*
- B. **Luke 23:39–42** – *“But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?’<sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’<sup>42</sup> And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’<sup>43</sup> And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’”*

*“What, then, is to be our response? It can only be to join our voices with the voices of the Father and the Son and the Spirit, and to confess Jesus Christ as the second and last Adam by who by his death and resurrection has once for all opened the gates of paradise for us. What he has opened, no one can close. Therefore, abide in him, rise up into that paradise by faith, and worship the triune God today in the power of the Spirit.” (p. 130)*